



Office of the Attorney General  
State of Texas

DAN MORALES  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

February 21, 1992

Mr. Mike M. Tabor  
Attorney for Dallas Central  
Appraisal District  
Clark, West, Keller, Butler & Ellis  
4800 Renaissance Tower  
Dallas, Texas 75270-2146

OR92-73

Dear Mr. Tabor:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Texas Open Records Act, article 6252-17a, V.T.C.S. Your request was assigned ID# 14694.

The Dallas Central Appraisal District (the district) received an open records request for access to the "Comments" field of a computer screen that contains, in addition to public information, information made confidential by Tax Code section 22.27(a). You inquire about the manner in which the district may release the public information contained in the "Comments" field.

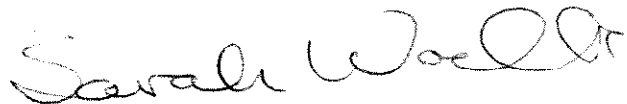
Section 10(a) of the Open Records Act prohibits the release of confidential information. Thus, the public may not have direct access to computer files if the files contain confidential information. Attorney General Opinion JM-672 (1987); *see also* Open Records Decision Nos. 571 (1990); 492 (1988) (regarding information stored in computers).

Section 22.27(a) of the Tax Code makes confidential "information voluntarily disclosed to an appraisal office ... about real ... property sales prices after a promise it will be held confidential." *See generally* Open Records Decision No. 358 (1983). Except as authorized by section 22.27(b), this type of information may not be released to anyone other than an employee of the appraisal office who appraises

property. *Id.* Because the "Comments" field contains information made confidential by section 22.27(a), the district may not grant to the requestor access to this field of the district's computer. The district must release the public information in the "Comments" field in a manner that will not reveal confidential information, such as by making a paper copy of the field and deleting the confidential information. *See* Open Records Decision No. 145 (1976) (Open Records Act does not require that information be released in form requested). *See generally* Open Records Decision No. 571 (copy enclosed).

Because case law and prior published open records decisions resolve your request, we are resolving this matter with this informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. If you have questions about this ruling, please refer to OR92-73.

Yours very truly,



Sarah Woelk  
Assistant Attorney General  
Opinion Committee

SW/RWP/lcd

Ref.: ID# 14694

Enclosures: Open Records Decision No. 571

cc: David Kaplan  
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(w/o enclosures)